

5/5/10

Testimony from Gina Yacobozzi

HB 5280

- 1) Intro: Gina – Michigan born and raised, Michigan educated, dietician, mother of three
- 2) Have a skill for and love of making baked goods using fresh Michigan ingredients and produce. If I want to support my household by selling these products at a farmer's market, I only need to do the following:
  - Commercial site
  - Plumbing, electrical, HVAC – compliant with commercial standards
  - Smooth-surface flooring
  - INDUSTRIAL appliances – not able to use local, Michigan-based Whirlpool appliances – even “top-of-the-line”
  - Refrigerator
  - Freezer
  - Two ovens
  - Multiple mixers due to food allergies
  - Not to mention trays/racks/etc.
  - 3 compartment stainless steel sink
  - Separate hand-washing sink
  - Mop sink
  - Solid-surface counter tops
  - Handicapped-accessible restroom
  - Separate storage area for food
  - Separate storage area for cleaning supplies
  - Inspections by local Health Department
  - Water testing
  - Soil testing
  - Other inspections per local ordinances
  - State of Michigan licensure
  - Third party food testing and labeling – in the same manner as commercial products sold on store shelves.
- 3) Just 2 years and \$30,000 later, I will be ready...having yet to hire one employee or make one biscotti. All for a seasonal business that contributes approximately \$75 a week to putting food on my family's table.
- 4) And speaking of my family, I can, at the same time that I am doing all this, safely make and feed the same baked goods (on a quality Whirlpool appliance) to the most important consumers in my life: my three children.
- 5) House Bill No. 5280 allows me to make these same goods available to Michigianians and visitors to our state at farmers markets, with reasonable restrictions on products and reasonable labeling requirements.

6) House Bill No. 5280 allows me to support: (a) Michigan agriculture by utilizing the products of our Michigan farmers, (b) Michigan tourism by supplying fresh Michigan products to visitors, (c) Michigan economy by encouraging locals and visitors to “buy Michigan” in a wide range of products, and (d) Michigan households, like mine, by providing them with healthy and delicious Michigan goods.

7) I urge you to pass this legislation for the good of Michigan, its agriculture and tourism industries, and its families. Thank you.

5/5/10

Testimony from Vedette Cordes  
HB 5280

Cottage Food Operation: a person who produces or packages non-potentially hazardous food in a kitchen of that person's primary domestic residence. Obviously this involves agricultural operation that finishes a raw commodity and is integral to the agricultural production of a farm.

How does this apply to me, my family and my parents farm? Let's start with facts....

1. I am a Michigan native, raised on a fruit farm. Family farm since 1929.
2. Experienced the trials and tribulations of a small family farm operation. For example; complete lost of crop due to hard freeze, wind/storm damage, fruit disease.
3. Fighting against foreign imports at local grocery chains. Losing to 3rd world pricing both in labor and retail.
4. Been a long time supporter of agriculture and local tourism. For example; my grandfather, Anthony Vilutis, offered U-pick cherries and peaches in the late 1940's-1950's which gained recognition of agricultural richness for folks from the Chicagoland area.

Why my presence here today?

I want to emphasize on how this bill will impact not only myself but many other local farmers in Berrien county. Many local growers that partake in the Saint Joseph Farmers market are small family farms. These growers support Michigan tourism, which in turn supports local economy.  
- A big revenue win for the state!

Going beyond the economic aspects of local growers and farmers market... how about the idealism that the Michiganians and visitors to our state who frequent these markets create a relationship with these growers, have a level of comfort knowing where their fruits and vegetables come from, and keep coming back here for more produce season after season, year after year.

Sure we can discuss nutritional values of the fruits and vegetables that Michigan produces, but I want to place stronger emphasis on "Freshness". Logistically speaking, most grocery chains and restaurants purchase their vegetables and or fruits from food brokers and or distribution channels. Which most likely obtain these fruits and vegetable out of state. Wouldn't it be nice to see choices given to our local consumers and local restaurants to offer local flavor?

In closing, what does it take to understand the need for local grown? What type of empowerment needs to be implemented to establish the sale and use of fresh fruits, vegetables, baked goods and acceptable canning goods. - House Bill No. 5280!

Please enact this Cottage Food Bill and give the citizens and visitors to our State the right to choose Michigan grown.

Sincerely,

Vedette Jean Palis Cordes

Palis Fruit Farm

Ag. Committee Members,

I would like to start by thanking Rep. John Proos for delivering my written statement in regards to house bill #5280. As a resident and consumer in the state of Michigan I support house bill 5280. I truly believe that this only brings positive changes to our state.

I feel it is important to feed my family the best food I can afford. This bill will help my family and others have access to locally made foods that are affordable and healthy. Currently, if I want to purchase a locally made pie or strawberry jam I have to pay a hefty premium because of the cost in state fees and licenses which get carried on to the consumer. This forces most families into compromising their food standards because they can not afford the best foods for their family. It is only right to give Michigan families access to the best quality food available.

The way the current law is structured it hurts our local economy. Every time a family buys a product not made in Michigan another dollar leaves our state's economy. Michigan can not afford to lose any more jobs or revenue then we already have lost. It only makes sense to allow residents in our state to make a living off their own land and in their own homes.

This bill will help put people back to work, revitalize local communities, and help families eat healthier. I urge you to keep this bill alive and let it move on to the next step.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Emily Lah

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